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THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

RAVI VENKATARAMAN, et al.

Serial No.: 10/601,176

ILLUMINATED SIGN

Filed: June 20, 2003

Art Unit: 3611

Examiner: Cassandra Hope Davis

Atty. Docket No.: 02-562 US

Commissioner for Patents

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Sir:

In response to the Restriction Requirement mailed September 10, 2004, Applicants provisionally elect, with traverse, Group I comprising Figs. 1-6 and Claims 1-13 and 15-26 readable thereon. The Examiner required restriction between Group I comprising Figs. 1-6, Group II comprising Figs. 7-10, and Group III comprising Fig. 11.

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Susan I. Coffman

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(Signature of person mailing paper or fee)

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Applicants kindly request examination of the elected embodiment and reserve the right to file during the pendency of the present application one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected and/or canceled embodiments.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner will not be required to make an additional search in considering the inventions described in the restricted claims (14 and 27-31) and thus all claims 1-31 should be prosecuted on the merits. The primary distinguishing characteristic between Group I (Figs. 1-6) and Group II (Figs. 7-10) is that the diffusion layer 18 of Group II has a front defining at least one character or symbol in raised relief with respect to a substantially planar portion of the front face. Claim 14 of Group III is distinguished from the other claims in that a longitudinal axis of each cavity containing a light emitting member (in-whole or in-part) is oriented substantially parallel to the back face of the light diffusion layer. MPEP § 803, in relevant part, states that:

[i]f the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.

To conserve the time of both the Office and the Applicants herein, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the Restriction Requirement.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would be beneficial to advance prosecution of the application to early issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: October 12, 2004